United Nations A/58/709

General Assembly

Distr.: General
11 February 2004

Original: English

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 94 (d)
Environment and sustainable development: further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Letter dated 6 February 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Bahamas to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

At the request of the Alliance of Small Island States and Small Island Developing States that participated in the Interregional Preparatory Meeting for the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, which was held in Nassau from 26 to 30 January 2004, I have the honour to transmit to you the Nassau Declaration, adopted by ministers and heads of delegation (see annex).

I draw your attention to paragraph 16 of the Nassau Declaration and, in this regard, I wish to inform you that the Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action will first be discussed with the Group of 77 and China before its formal introduction.

I would request that the Nassau Declaration be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 94 (d), entitled "Environment and sustainable development: further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States".

(*Signed*) Paulette A. **Bethel**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 6 February 2004 from the Permanent Representative of the Bahamas to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Interregional Preparatory Meeting of Small Island Developing States for the International Meeting to Review Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Nassau Declaration

1 We, the Ministers and senior representatives of the Governments of the Small Island Developing States, gathered in Nassau, Bahamas for the Interregional Preparatory Meeting for the International Meeting to Review implementation of the Barbados Program of Action on the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States, from 26-30 January 2004, wish to thank the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas for hosting this meeting.

2 We reaffirm the continued validity of the Barbados Program of Action (BPOA) as the fundamental framework for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and express our continued support to the principles of the 1994 Declaration of Barbados. We consider the 10-year review of the BPOA in 2004 as a critical process in giving effect to our collective commitments to the sustainable development of SIDS.

3 We reaffirm our commitment to the targets and time-tables in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), and in particular the matters of significance to SIDS in the JPOI, especially matters contained in Chapter VII, and further commit ourselves to the monitoring and evaluation of progress at regular intervals towards the achievement of the MDGs and sustainable development.

4 We considered the SIDS National Assessment Reports for the BPOA+10 Review process, together with the outcomes of the three Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Regional meetings, the Regional Synthesis and Draft Position papers, as well as with the outcomes of Expert Group meetings, and presentations made during this Inter-regional meeting.

5 We acknowledge that SIDS have made some progress in the implementation of the BPOA, largely through domestic measures, despite the impediments posed by their structural disadvantages and vulnerabilities. We also recognize that the BPOA is currently being implemented in a very different global environment from that which prevailed at the time of its adoption in 1994.

6 We are however concerned by the weakening economic performance of many SIDS since the adoption of the BPOA, due in part to their declining

trade performance. We recognize that international trade is important for the building of resilience and sustainable development of SIDS and the necessity for the international financial and trading systems granting special and differential treatment to SIDS.

7 We are concerned that SIDS are unable to effectively participate in the multilateral trade negotiations, resulting in their further marginalization. We call upon the World Trade Organization (WTO) to recognize the special case of SIDS and take appropriate action.

8 We fully support efforts towards sustainable development and call for the demonstration of political will to carry out commitments in this regard.

9 We appreciate the support from the international community over the past decade in assisting us address our needs in the context of the BPOA, but note that not all commitments have been honored. We further note that since the adoption of the BPOA the changing external and internal circumstances are further exacerbating the challenges faced by SIDS.

10 We call for greater support for and improved coordination among our development partners for the effective implementation of the BPOA at the national and regional levels.

11 We reaffirm the need for SIDS to participate fully in the global efforts towards sustainable development to continue and intensify their participations in the key international meetings and negotiations to advance the process of the sustainable development of SIDS and low lying coastal states.

12 We emphasize the urgent needs of SIDS for new and additional financial resources, provided in adequate, predictable and timely flows, in order to respond effectively to their sustainable development challenges.

13 We acknowledge the value of increased cooperation among SIDS, and undertake to make further progress in this area, including through the expeditious review of the institutional arrangements required for the strengthening of AOSIS and of its role in the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy, to be completed in time for adoption by the AOSIS Summit to be held in Mauritius, and in this context we recognize the importance of establishing an AOSIS structure to strengthen and profile SIDS issues in global affairs.

14 We recognize the importance of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to financing sustainable development initiatives SIDS and in this regard recommend that all necessary measure be taken to ensure the full and complete participation of SIDS at all relevant meetings of the GEF, consistent with the decision of the GEF Council reached at its meeting on 19-21 November 2003.

15 We commend initiatives undertaken since the adoption of the BPOA in the area of multilateral environment agreements, for example the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent, and others.

16 We have collectively developed a Strategy for the Further Implementation of the BPOA taking into account new and emerging issues and the effective participation of civil society. We commend this strategy to the international community, and we seek the support of our development partners in its implementation.

17 We believe that the Strategy for the Further Implementation of the BPOA will assist in providing a tangible outcome for the International Meeting and contribute significantly to the achievement of sustainable development and in the process the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Done at Nassau, Bahamas, 30 January 2004